

Rockaway Township Report



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www.rockawaytownship.org

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Mayor's Corner: Budget Address



Every year, our Township Council is required by law to adopt a Municipal Budget. The Mayor and administrative staff prepare recommendations in the form of a draft budget but the Council must ensure that the adopted budget adequately satisfies the needs of the community and serves the best interests of the Township and its taxpayers.

The 2015 Municipal Budget, including the capital improvement program, totals \$39,423,387. The Township is within both State mandated appropriation and tax levy caps. Significant dollar increases are seen in insurance, salaries and wages, and pension expenses.

The Township has taken action over the past few years to limit tax increases while still preserving services in accordance with residents' expectations. These actions include reducing staffing levels, limiting operating expenses, and modifying retirement health benefits for new hires. This trend

has continued with the recent settlement of contracts with the Township's White and Blue Collar Unions. The recent contracts eliminate accumulated time payments for new hires, the implementation of performance appraisals, and elimination of the salary step guide.

Revenues come from four sources including current property taxes, miscellaneous revenues generated by operations, general fund surplus and receipts for delinquent taxes. In 2015, the Township will receive \$1.8 million from the state in the form of consolidated municipal property tax relief, total energy tax receipts distribution, watershed aid and garden state trust; altogether referred to as "state aid."

In fact, "state aid" is actually two revenue replacement programs originally collected by local government up until the early 1980s. As defined by the State of New Jersey, the energy tax receipts distribution is based upon the ratio of the utilities' total length of lines or mains located in, on or over any street, highway, road or other public place. The consolidated municipal property tax relief is

made up of a number of taxes including the financial business tax, the insurance franchise tax and the corporation business tax, just to name a few.

The loss of real dollars in the form of "state aid" has another effect on the municipal budget by making the Township's operations more dependent upon local property taxes. In 2007, local property taxes represented 66% of total annual revenues. In 2015 local property taxes comprised more than 75% of total annual revenues. This means when our insurance or pension expenses increase, it has an ever greater impact on local property taxes.

Appropriations are the mechanism that allows local government to provide or deliver services to its residents. Significant dollar increases are seen in salaries and wages of \$411,982, insurance of \$386,653 and statutory or pension expenses of \$137,350. Both the Morris County Joint Insurance Fund and the State Health Benefits Program have rate increases that must be funded.

(continued on page eight)

Scenes from the March 28 Easter Festival



Protecting Your Home from Burglary

During the past year, there have been several burglaries in the Township and surrounding areas. The Police Department is working hard to find those responsible for them and continues to protect the Township from further burglaries. There are some things Rockaway Township residents can do to protect themselves and their neighbors:

- Change the pattern of when you are leaving your home
- If you have a home alarm, use it
- If you are going to be gone for a period of time, notify your neighbor and let them know if anyone will be at your home while you are gone
- Be aware of your neighborhood – You know best who belongs and who does not
- Don't ignore the unknown – Call the Police to report suspicious activity

Mayor's Special Recognition



Mayor Michael Dachisen would like to congratulate the following Police Department employees who recently retired:

- Chief Walter Ardin, Jr., effective March 1, 2015
- Sgt. Michael Wladich, effective January 1, 2015
- Ptl. Patricia Abrahamsen, effective January 1, 2015

Mayor Dachisen would also like to recognize the following 'members on the move' within the Police Department:

- Ptl. Michael Dachisen, Jr. was promoted to Sergeant and assigned to the Patrol Division
- Det. John McParland was promoted to Sergeant and assigned to the Patrol Division
- Ptl. Rafael Sanchez was assigned to the Detective Bureau
- Capt. Martin McParland, Jr. was named Officer In Charge

Your Health: Diabetes - The Silent Disease

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into the energy needed for daily life. The cause of diabetes continues to be a mystery, although both genetics and environmental factors such as obesity and lack of exercise appear to play roles.

29 million people in the United States, or 9.3% of the population, have diabetes - up from the previous estimate of 26 million in 2010, according to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Though these numbers are staggering, what is more alarming is that another 86 million people are pre-diabetic, and it is predicted that 1/3 of the country will be diabetic by 2050 if current trends continue. Diabetes often goes

undiagnosed because many of its symptoms seem harmless. In fact, one in four people with diabetes doesn't know he or she has it. However, studies indicate that the early detection of diabetes symptoms and treatment can decrease the chance of significant complications.

There are two major forms of diabetes. Type 1 diabetes, also called insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM), usually affects children and young adults, although disease onset can occur at any age. Type 2 diabetes, also known as non-insulin-dependent diabetes, may account for over 90% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is associated with older age, obesity, family history and physical inactivity, though it is increasingly being diagnosed in children and adolescents.

Because diabetes often goes unnoticed and undiagnosed, it is important to be aware of its most frequent signs. Symptoms include frequent urination, excessive thirst, extreme hunger, weight loss, fatigue, irritability and blurry vision. If diabetes goes untreated for a long time, complications such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney disease, dental caries, amputations and other significant problems may occur.

Diabetes is a serious disease, but most cases can be managed through physical activity, diet and appropriate use of medications. The Division of Health periodically holds diabetes screenings. Check the Township website or call 973-983-2848 for more information. Another great resource is the National Diabetes Prevention Program, which may be found at www.cdc.gov/diabetes.

From the Tax Collector

Homestead Benefit Program

Residents who are eligible for Homestead Credits will receive a revised tax bill for the 2015 second quarter property tax payment. Credit amounts, once determined by the State of New Jersey, will be applied toward second quarter taxes. If you need assistance to determine if you qualify for this program, please visit the State's website at www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/homestead/geninf.shtm or call 1-888-238-1233.

Property Tax Reimbursements (Senior Freeze)

The NJ Division of Taxation has begun mailing 2014 property tax reimbursement applications to senior citizens and disabled residents who may qualify for the program. The deadline for filing the applications is June 1, 2015. If you need assistance in determining whether you qualify for this program, please visit the State's website at www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/ptr/ or call 1-800-992-6508.

Frog Falls Registration Open!

Residents are advised that Frog Falls, the Aquatic Park located on the grounds of the Picatinny Arsenal, is now open for registration. Please visit Rockaway Township's Community Pass at <https://register.communitypass.net/reg/> to register.

Partner Communities are eligible to joint Frog Falls. These municipalities include: Jefferson, Wharton, Denville, Mt. Arlington, Rockaway (Borough), Mine Hill, Dover, Sparta, Roxbury, West Milford, Town of Boonton, Victory Gardens, Military Veterans (ID or DD214 Required), Rockaway Township Employees, Rockaway Township Board of Education Employees and Morris County First Responders (ID Required). Active Military, Retired Veterans, 100% Disabled Veterans or DOD Civilian Employees need to contact Picatinny directly by calling MWR at 973-724-5515.

A family membership package of the same family residing at the same mailing address is defined as one or both parents, legal guardians, children under the age of 21 and full-time students under the age of 24. Children may be natural or adopted, foster or any minor child/children for which the parents or guardians have legal custody. Children over 21 that are incapable of self-support



due to mental or physical incapability shall be considered in the family unit. Refunds will be granted to applicants if requested prior to opening day. A 20% administrative fee will be deducted from all refunds. *No refunds will be given after May 23, the day the pool has opened for the season.*

Stay in the Know!

Want to keep up with all things Rockaway? Subscribe to Rockaway Township's email distribution list for the most up-to-date information! Go to www.egovlink.com/rockaway/subscriptions/subscribe.asp. Don't forget to like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RockawayTownship.

With the Township's new registration process, you may also create an account on Community Pass. To register and for more information, go to <https://register.communitypass.net/reg/>. All programs utilize Community Pass for registration.

Community Services



Take Me Out to the Ballgame

The Rockaway Township Baseball Association, Baseball Boosters and Girls Softball announce that the baseball season will officially open with the annual Little League Baseball Parade on April 11.

The parade will start at 10:00am sharp at the intersection of Fleetwood Drive and Miller Ave. Participants will be assembling between 9:15am and 9:30am at Miller Ave. and Jordan Road. Any group that would like to join in celebrating the opening of the baseball and softball seasons are asked to send an email to booster@rtbaseballweb.org.

Mt. Hope Pond Badge Registration

Mt. Hope Pond beach and badge registration will begin on May 1 for Rockaway Township residents only. Residents may register at <https://register.communitypass.net/reg/> (proof of residency required). You *must* purchase your badges through Community Pass. Once you have registered, you will need to come to the Department of Community Services with your receipt and a valid form of identification to receive your badge. The cost for each badge is \$25.00 per person. Guest passes may be purchased on the same day at the beach at a cost of \$2.00 per pass/person (exact change required). Children under five years of age enter at no cost. For your safety, please adhere to the beach rules. Have a safe and enjoyable summer!



Engineering Positive Change in Rockaway

Certified lifeguards are needed at Mt. Hope Pond for the 2015 season! If you are interested, please contact Community Services at 973-983-2841

Second quarter taxes are due on May 1, with a 10 day interest free period. Please submit your tax payment online at Rockaway Township's website

NJDOT Grant – Daniel Street

Rockaway Township received a NJ Department of Transportation Municipal Aid Grant to improve the condition of a portion of Daniel Street with pavement repair, drainage improvements, curbing and handicap ramps. The work is scheduled to begin this spring.

Municipal Complex Sidewalk Renovation

Rockaway Township will soon be performing rehabilitation work at the Municipal Complex. All existing asphalt sidewalks will be replaced with new concrete. In addition, sidewalk will be added in front of the municipal building and will wrap around to the Police Department on the side of the building, providing for safer pedestrian travel from the parking lot. The Township wishes to advise the public that some inconvenience may be expected during construction, which is anticipated to last approximately 60 days. Signs will be posted with regard to access on days when the main doors may be inaccessible. We appreciate the public's understanding and patience while we improve the safety and appearance of the facility. Work is scheduled to begin this spring.

Zoning Review & Permit Requirements

If you are planning to construct a shed, deck or addition to your home this spring, be advised these types of projects require a zoning review prior to obtaining a building permit. If you have any questions regarding zoning requirements, please contact the Zoning Department at 973-983-2814.

As warm weather nears, it's time to start thinking about those spring and summer projects. If you are planning to renovate your bathroom or kitchen, build a deck, put up a new fence, install a

swimming pool or perform any other home improvement, you will need to know which permits are required. Please check www.rockawaytownship.org or call the Building Department at 973-983-2809 to verify permit requirements for all of your future projects.

If you are planning to install an inflatable/temporary pool to keep cool this summer, please contact the Building Department regarding any permit requirements that may be applicable. All Home Improvement Contractors must be registered with the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs. Please visit www.njconsumeraffairs.gov to verify a contractor's registration.

New Parking Lot Project – Peterson Field

The Township Mayor and Council have authorized a long awaited improvement project at Peterson Field. Beginning in March, the Town began construction toward the addition of 219 parking spaces to the complex. Peterson Field is the hub of recreation and sports activity in the community and in recent years, major events, tournaments and even routine activity have caused increased overflow parking along Fleetwood Drive, creating potential safety concerns. The project is expected to be completed by August 1, 2015.

Peterson Field opened in 1983 and over the past three decades, the complex has seen significant expanded use due to the growing needs of the community. This project represents the first major renovation in an area of the park that had historically been set aside for future recreation development. The Township is also planning much needed renovation to the existing bathroom and concession facility later this year.

Breaking News: Summer Recreation Location Change

The Township has just been advised by the Board of Education that due to construction at Birchwood and Dwyer Schools this summer, our recreation program will *only* be offered at the Dennis B. O'Brien (DBO) and Katherine D. Malone (KDM) Schools. The registration at DBO will be capped at 280 participants, with the remainder of summer recreation participants needing to register at KDM. Registrations will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis. Additional information will be forthcoming.

Rockaway Township recognizes the potential inconvenience to parents, but due to very limited options and for both the safety of our children and the efficiency of the overall program, we will need to operate in this fashion this summer.

Registration for the summer recreation program begins on May 1 and is offered to Rockaway Township children entering second through eighth grades in September. The program will run from June 29 through August 7 from 9:00am – 12:00pm. Register by creating an account on Community Pass at <https://register.communitypass.net/reg/>.

What's Happening

APRIL

- 1st Frog Falls registration open - For Rockaway Township residents
Online registration through Community Pass
- 11th Little League Baseball Parade
Fleetwood Drive and Miller Ave.
10:00am
Assemble at Miller Ave. and Jordan Road at 9:15am
- 24th Health Education: Smart Nutrition Tips for Adults*
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
1:00pm - 1:45pm

MAY

- 1st Frog Falls registration open - For eligible towns, veterans and Morris County first responders
Online registration through Community Pass
- 1st Mount Hope Pond registration open
Rockaway Township residents only
Online registration through Community Pass
- 7th Free Adult Immunizations*
Rockaway Township Health Center
419 Green Pond Road
Call 973-983-2848 for more information
- 13th Blood pressure screening
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
11:00am - 11:30am
- 15th Health Education: Standing Tall Against Falls*
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
1:00pm - 2:00pm
- 16th Get Hooked on Fishing Contest
Location and TBD
- 25th Rockaway/Denville Memorial Day Parade
Check www.rockawaytownship.org for details

JUNE

- 10th Blood pressure screening
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
11:00am - 11:30am

JULY - AUGUST

- 3rd & Ford Faesch Open House
- 4th Come celebrate the birth of our nation!
629 Mount Hope Road
- 6th Summer Concert Series Begins
Park Lake Gazebo, Mt. Hope Road
Every Sunday through August 31, 3:00pm - 5:00pm
Rain location: Rockaway Township Square Mall

* Pre-registration required for some Township events. Please call the appropriate department for information.

'Skip' Gets a New Home

Visitors to the Township Municipal Complex may have noticed the rusty old cart on the corner of the parking lot. The "Skip Cart," as it is commonly referred to, was used extensively here in the Township at the various mine workings. This particular cart was recovered from the Beach Glen mine by a development company in the late 1980s and was donated to the Township.

Last fall, Nick Clegg, an aspiring Eagle Scout, worked with Township and Historical Society officials to relocate the cart to another area of the municipal complex and create a new presentation showing how the cart would have looked on a rail. A new interpretive sign will also be erected, indicating the use and history of this local mining era relic. The cart was typical of the early to mid-1900's and was used to transport materials out of the mines. In many cases it also transported miners and their gear in and out of the mine workings. The cart was pulled by a steel cable from its large arm to the top of the mine shaft, where the cart would flip forward to dump its contents into a collection bin. Township officials anticipate a formal re-dedication this spring.



Free Seedling Program

Rockaway Township will be receiving a grant through the NJDEP, State Forestry Service, for 2000 seedling trees that will be available to residents free of charge (limit 5 per resident). Working cooperatively with the support of the Rockaway Area Girl Scouts of America and the Boy Scouts of America's Troops 113,160 and 165, the trees will be available for pick up on Saturday April 25, 2015 between the hours of 9am and 3pm at either the Hibernia Firehouse or the Mount Hope Firehouse. Please make sure you have the ability to plant the trees within several days of their distribution. The NJ Tree Recovery Campaign 2015 is designed to assist municipalities and residents by continuing to plant new trees in areas that were impacted by Superstorm Sandy. If you have questions about the seedling program, please contact the Department of Community Services.

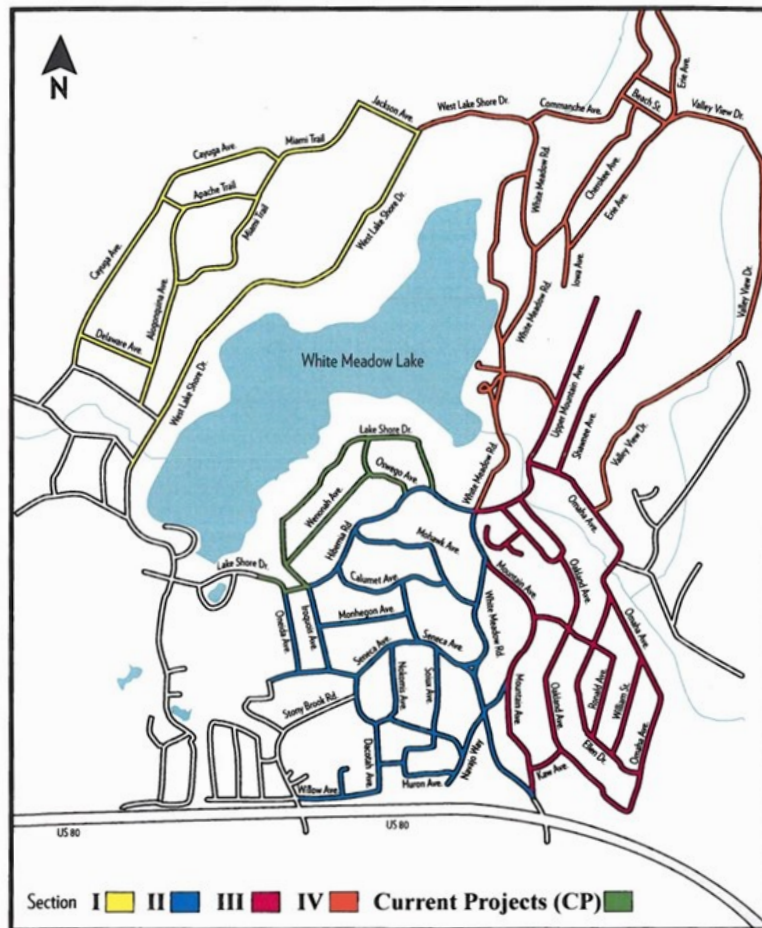


White Meadow Lake Project Update

New Jersey Natural Gas (NJNG) has completed the installation of the main gas line in the first phase of the White Meadow Lake (WML) Project. Any resident may still connect to the main line by contacting Brian Klinger of NJNG at bklinger@NJNG.com. Summer is a great time to connect.

Phase Two residents should have received a letter from NJNG informing you that NJNG is installing the main and instructing residents on how to contact NJNG. This section should be completed by the fall 2015.

White Meadow Lake, Rockaway Township Community Conversion Project





Install High-Efficiency Equipment

- ▶ Rebates up to **\$1,400**
- ▶ Up to **\$6,500** 0% APR On-Bill Repayment Program

New Jersey Natural Gas (NJNG) customers who install high-efficiency equipment can receive valuable rebates from NJNG's The SAVEGREEN Project® and New Jersey's Clean Energy Program™ (NJCEP). **Contractors** – be sure to share this information with your customers to help them save energy and money on your installation!

Individual Equipment Rebates/Efficiency Requirements	NJNG Rebate
Furnace (Minimum 95% AFUE)	\$500
Boiler (Minimum Hydronic 85% AFUE, Steam 82% AFUE)	\$500
Plus , NJCEP offers additional equipment rebates up to \$500. Visit NJCleanEnergy.com for details.	

Install Heat and Hot Water - *You have options!*

Install a qualifying furnace or boiler (see efficiency levels above) AND a qualifying water heater (minimum .67 Power-Vented).

<p>Receive an NJNG \$500 rebate</p> <p><i>or</i></p> <p>Apply for up to \$6,500 at 0% APR for five years through NJNG's On-Bill Repayment Program (OBRP)*. Customers can call 877-455-NJNG (6564) for a list of participating contractors.</p>	<p>◀ AND ▶</p>	<p>Receive an NJCEP WARMAdvantage \$900 Combination Rebate**. Includes qualifying combination units**.</p> <p>Visit NJCleanEnergy.com or call 866-NJSMART (657-6278) for information on NJCEP rebates and incentives.</p>
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Get Your Business Listed

Join close to 200 participating contractors **offering 0% APR OBRP financing to their customers**. Contact John at jschmidt@njng.com or 732-378-4918 to find out how you can be added to our participating contractor list.

Contractors and customers, contact us with any questions:

877-455-NJNG (6564)
www.savegreenproject.com

*For example, on a \$6,500 repayment with an APR of 0% and a term of five years, the customer would make 59 payments of \$108.34, and one final payment of \$107.94. Visit savegreenproject.com for complete terms and conditions for NJNG rebates and OBRP.
 **Visit NJCleanEnergy.com for information on NJCEP rebates and incentives.

Mayor's Budget Address *(continued from page one)*

Staffing costs cover approximately 60% of the total budget. Salary and wages in this budget total \$13.4 million. This represents an increase of 3.15% or \$411,982 over 2014 salary and wages. The increase in salaries and wages includes the 2014 salary increment for the White and Blue Collar employees as a result of concluding the negotiations of those labor agreements.

The Township has been dealing with substantial commercial tax appeals for more than a decade. The adoption of the 2015 municipal budget continues an alternative approach to combat these crushing tax appeals by implementing a process of reassessment. It is also significant to note the Township has realized a decline in its total assessed value of \$847 million since 2008 due to market conditions and these large commercial tax appeals.

The difference between the residential and commercial property values has allowed commercial property owners to file and win large tax appeal refunds. Tax court ordered refunds must then be paid for by the municipality with your property tax dollars. Over the past seven years the Township

has paid out \$6.2 million to settle these large commercial tax appeals. The municipal portion of the refunds paid out was \$1.6 million as compared to the school portion of the refunds that totaled almost \$4 million – all of these monies paid out by the Township and its taxpayers.

The 2015 municipal budget calls for a rate increase of less than two cents. Despite the cost saving measures mentioned here, the decision to increase taxes is carefully considered in context of the Township's long term fiscal integrity; especially in times of significant pressure from commercial tax appeals. The change in the municipal tax rate represents a \$48 annual municipal tax increase for a home assessed at \$300,000.

This year's budget maintains a prudent level of surplus in order to avoid potential spikes in future tax rates. The 2015 municipal budget, as presented, limits impacts to current service levels in a difficult operating environment. These services are being preserved as best as can be in accordance with residents' expectations and contribute to the quality of life for all taxpayers in Rockaway Township.

Summer Gazebo Concert Series

The Rockaway Gazebo Committee proudly announces its annual Summer Concert Series. The concerts will be held every Sunday from July 6 through August 31 between 3:00pm – 5:00pm at the Park Lake gazebo. The concerts are free for all to attend.

The gazebo concert series traditionally includes country western, swing, oldies, rock and roll, and dance music. This year will mark the Gazebo Committee of the Rockaways' 27th concert series at the Park Lake Gazebo.

In the event of rain, concerts will be held at the Rockaway Township Square Mall near Macy's.



Free Adult Immunizations and Health Promotion Programs

The Rockaway Township Division of Health wishes to advise residents of a new program that provides free immunizations to qualifying residents, as well as its slate of spring health education programs.

The first adult immunization clinic will be held at 4:00pm on Thursday, May 7 at the Rockaway Township Health Center, located at 419 Green Pond Road. Vaccines available to eligible adults include Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Shingles, Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR), Meningitis, Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Tdap) and HPV.

The Division of Health also announces its spring health promotion programs, which are geared toward Rockaway Township's adult and elderly residents.

The first spring program, entitled 'Smart Nutrition Tips for Adults,' will take place at the Rockaway Township Municipal Building from 1:00pm - 1:45pm on Friday, April 24. Speaker Kaitlin Bennett, Registered Dietician with ShopRite, will recommend foods for promoting health and well being, and will share a sample of smart recipes with attendees. Ms. Bennett

provided a popular program to residents last year, which focused on structuring diet to prevent cancer.

The Division of Health will also present 'Standing Tall Against Falls' from 1:00pm - 2:00pm on Friday, May 15 at the Rockaway Township Municipal Building. Sharon Maldonado, Health Educator with the Morristown Medical Center, will share tips to prevent falls and enjoy a healthier lifestyle. Residents are asked to register for either of these programs by calling the Division of Health at 973-983-2848.

What Does a Registered Municipal Clerk Do?

The State of New Jersey mandates that every municipality appoint a registered municipal clerk (RMC) (N.J.S.A. 40A:9-133). To become certified there are several courses an RMC must take before sitting for a state exam. After receiving a State license, an RMC must take requisite continuing education courses in order to renew their RMC license.

The RMC is basically the secretary for the township' governing body. By state law, an RMC is responsible for:

- Preparing an agenda for every meeting, in coordination with Township department heads and the Township's Council President; this may be found on our website, along with resolutions and ordinances. By law, the RMC must attend every meeting of the Township Council and prepare the minutes from every meeting. After minutes are approved, they are posted on the Township's website. Certain documents are required by law to be published in the Township's official newspaper within a prescribed time.
- RMCs are the keepers of municipal records, particularly the documents that law requires to be maintained in perpetuity. These include minutes, ordinances, resolutions, etc. RMCs are responsible for all OPRA (Open Public Records Act) requests, which must be fulfilled within certain timeframes.
- The RMC is in charge of all elections, which include the primary election, general election and any other special elections that must be held in the Township. RMCs must be available before the polls open (6:00am) and must be available until they close (8:00pm). After the polls close, the RMC must tally all the results, which can take several hours.
- RMCs are responsible for many licenses and permits. Examples include limousine and taxi cab, vendor, bingo, raffle and street opening, just to name a few. RMCs also ensure that all alcoholic beverage control licenses are properly renewed. If an establishment should sell, the RMC must assist with the transfer of the license.

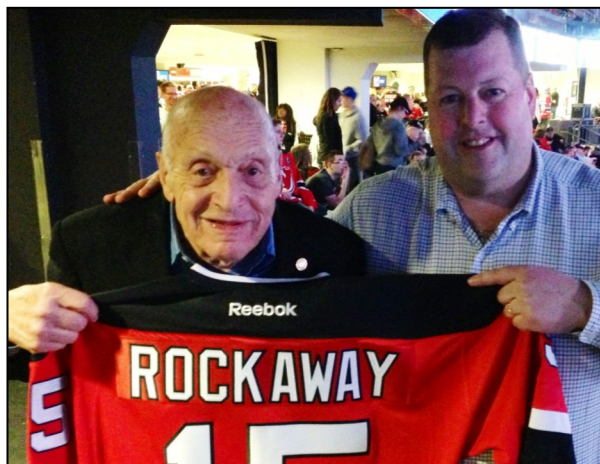
This is just a brief outline of an RMC's responsibilities. The list is long and diversified. The best part of this position is helping the citizens of Rockaway Township, as the RMC is often the first point of contact for residents and visitors.



Township & its Monuments Man Honored at the Rock

Rockaway Township residents had a devilish time at the Prudential Center on Friday, April 3, as the NJ Devils honored Rockaway Township and Hometown Hero Harry Ettlinger during its game against the Montreal Canadiens.

Mr. Ettlinger, one of five living members of the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Program (Monuments Men), was honored with a video tribute and narrated biography for his service as a World War II veteran and for his work in helping to save countless cultural antiquities that were stolen by the Nazis. The Rockaway Township Fire Department presented colors during the National Anthem and Peter Thornton, Chair of the Rockaway Township Hockey Board of Directors, was presented with a custom 'Rockaway' NJ Devils Jersey on camera. A wonderful time was had by all!



Top: Monuments Man Harry Ettlinger and Rockaway Township Hockey Board of Directors President Peter Thornton show off a custom Devils jersey.

Center: RT Officer in Charge Martin McParland chats up Harry Ettlinger

Left: Hometown Hero Harry Ettlinger is recognized by the crowd during Rockaway Township Day at the April 3 NJ Devils game.

Historical Flag Salute in Mount Hope

2015 represents the 200th anniversary of the end of the War of 1812 or, as some historians refer to it, America's Second War for Independence. Word spread quickly across our new country and celebrations broke out everywhere, and local documentation indicated that the miners at Mount Hope hoisted an American flag on the furnace to honor those who sacrificed and to commemorate the end of the war. The Historical Society of Rockaway Township had planned an event at the Ford Faesch House to reenact the event on Presidents Day, 2015, but due to extreme winter weather, the event was cancelled. Despite the foul weather, several youngsters nonetheless braved the elements and held up the flag in memory of the war's end.

Take a close look at the flag. See anything wrong? This is a replica flag of the one flown over the furnace in 1815. It has 15 white stars on a field of blue and 15 alternating red and white stripes. The Act of January 13, 1794 provided for 15 stripes and 15 stars after May 1795 – the thought was to add a star and a stripe for every new state admitted to the country. When that seemed to

be an issue, the *Act of April 4, 1818* provided for 13 stripes and one star for each state, to be added to the flag on the 4th of July following the admission of each new state. The act was signed by President Monroe and it's been that way ever since.

Once again, it is evident that Rockaway Township citizens were at the forefront of history in recognizing important events, and had the foresight to document their participation.



**The Rockaway
Gazebo
Committee
presents its
Summer Concert
Series at Park
Lake every
Sunday from
July 6 - August 31,
from 3pm - 5pm.
See our website
for more details!**



**Congratulations to the
Rockaway Township seventh
and eighth grade boys
basketball team on winning the
Seventh and Eighth Grade
Lakeland Championship!!!**

**Don't forget the
Annual Little
League Baseball
Parade at
10:00am on
April 11! Look
for updates and
more
information on
the Rockaway
Township
website!**

V.I.T.A. - Free Tax Return Preparation for Qualifying Taxpayers

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make \$53,000 or less, persons with disabilities, the elderly and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals.

In addition to VITA, the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program offers free tax help for all taxpayers, particularly those who are 60 years of age and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors. The IRS-certified volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retired

individuals associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS.

Before going to a VITA or TCE site, see Publication 3676-B for services provided, and check out the 'What to Bring' page to ensure you have all the required documents and information our volunteers will need to help you. *Please note that services can vary at each site due to the availability of volunteers certified with the tax law expertise required for your return.* Rockaway Township Residents are eligible and can make their appointment by calling 973-366-5327.

For additional information, please visit www.irs.gov/Individuals/Free-Tax-Return-Preparation-for-You-by-Volunteers.